Ganga Action Plan

1022. SHRI P. N. SUKUL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of the projects taken up under the Ganga Action Plan to make waters of the river pollution-free;

(b) what progress has been made so far in regard to these projects; and

(c) what steps have been taken in recent weeks to prevent further pollution of the waters of Ganga near Allahabad by the congregation of lakhs of pilgrims on the occasion of Kumbh Mela?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. R. ANSARI): (a) Under the Ganga Action Plan, a total of 262 schemes have been sanctioned at a cost of Rs. 257.07 crores for the three States of U.P., Bihar and West Bengal as per details given below:

State	No. of Schemes sanctioned	Estimated cost Rs. in Crores
U.P.	106	114.93
Bihar	45	33.59
West Bengal	111	108.55
	262	257.07

The schemes sanctioned fall into six categories, Interception and diversion, Sewage treatment plants, Low Cost Sanitation, Electric Crematoria, River Front Facilities such as Sauchalayas and related improvements and other schemes for Biological conservation of acquatic species, river quality monitoring etc.

(b) Out of the 262 schemes, 50 schemes at a cost of Rs. 16.39 crores have been completed. An amount of Rs. 114.06 crores has been spent on the Ganga Action Plan till 31-1-89. Most of the schemes for interception and diversion of waste water are at various stages of construction and are likely to be completed by the end of the Seventh Five Year Plan.

(c) The pollution on river occurs due to sewage flowing into the rivers Yamuna and Ganga upstream of Sangam through various nalas and the existing sewerage system. All the nalas have been tapped and waste water is diverted to pumping stations. The intermediate pumping stations have been renovated and the capacity of Main pumping station at Gau Ghat has been doubled. About 30 to 90 MLD of waste water previously flowing into the river is now flowing to Gau Ghat pumping station and is being pumped across Yamuna river to Naini and Dandi sewage farms. An exhibition on public awareness has been organised at the Mela site, combined with some miscellaneous public awareness activities.

Export Growth

1023. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Central Government had convened a meeting of trade and industry to ensure a 30 per cent growth in export this year;

(b) if so, what was the outcome of the talks held;

(c) whether any agreement has been reached in this regard and if so, to what extent the growth in exports is likely to be achieved; and

(d) what concessions are being provided to the trade and industry in achieving the target

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI): (a)

to (c) Export target for 1988-89 has been fixed at Rs. 18795 crores as compared to provisional export figures of Rs. 15719 crores during 1987-88. As a part of the strategy for increasing exports and exceed the target fixed for 1988-89 Government have initiated dialogue with Export Promotion Councils, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry large industrial houses and other export promotion agencies. During these meetings these organisations were exhorted to take all steps to achieve higher level of exports. The participants in these meetings have assured the government that they would strive to achieve a higher growth rate.

(d) The Government has implemented a number of measures to facilitate increased capacity for export production to upgrade technology to make the export sector being more competitive through improved access to capital goods and raw materials at near international prices and providing fiscal and monetary incentives for increasing exports.

Erosion of the Bhagirathi River Bank in Uluberia (West Bengal)

1024. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN:

SHRIMATI KANAK MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the serious situation of Uluberia in West Bengal due to erosion of the bank of river Bhagirathi;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether any action has been taken to save Uluberia; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI): (a) to (d) The Government of West Bengal has taken urgent palliative measures at an estimated cost of Rs. 10 lakhs to restore the damage caused due to subsidence to the embankment.

Embracing of Sikh Religion by Harijans in Meerut

1025. DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that about 350 Harijan families have embraced Sikh religion in Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh recently;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir. As per State Government's report 332 Harijans have embraced Sikh religion in Meerut District during the period November, 1988 to January, 1989.

(b) The Harijans of the Nagla Hereru area, who had been unhappy with the lack of support from caste Hindus in their disputes with the Muslims, especially from July, 1988, after the Gram Pradhan elections preferred to embrace Sikhism as a solution to their problems.

(c) It being public law and order problem the State Government is of the view that voluntary conversion is not objectionable unless use of force, inducement, or fraudulent means are established, for which provisions exists under IPC 352, 506 and 508. The